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Urban Experiences Laboratory

Public-Private spaces in Benidorm

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Synopsis

Benidorm is described as a laboratory of experiences and situations lived by tourists and inhabitants, where quaint experiences are gathered in different spaces, places and non-places of the city. In such areas, there are several controversial and conflicting points among them. In Benidorm, the tourist spot has become a stage, a place to stretch, transform, exaggerate and enjoy the reality it offers. The non-places in Benidorm have evolved to become exclusive places in this city, hence, proposing their study and experimentation in a prototype that seeks to enhance the hidden complexity of this land in order to comprehend better its reality and its success. The way in which visitors and inhabitants of different ages coexist together in Benidorm.

Key words: Manifesto, critique, urban space, prototype, social.

1. Explanation of the project

The project begins with the analysis of the space that the city of Benidorm offers, using for that purpose the definition, description and assessment of the different experiences, situations and interactions that tourists and inhabitants experiment in the different places and non-places of Benidorm.

1.1. Objective

The experiences, interactions and situations lived by all inhabitants and tourists from Benidorm have never been registered. Nonetheless, they are powerful and potential situations of the city, as well as representatives. Thus, it is the aim of this project. It pretends to go deeper in the particular situations and experiences of the people that exist in the common spaces of Benidorm. Furthermore, it analyses them objectively to demonstrate their success in order to propose new experiments in their public-private spaces.

1.2. Reasons that justify the interest of Benidorm

Drawing from the photographic approach from an experienced point of view, Benidorm could be understood as an urban laboratory, which may be used as a form to experiment with social relationships and its private and public spaces as well.

As the photographer from the Magnum Agency Martin Parr said: "Benidorm is an interesting place where people are mixed. Being interesting to study this clash of cultures, how the day have to be structured in the same place depend-ing on where people come from." This clash of cultures is the reason why the project is focused on examining the interactions, experiences and situations among international and national tourist and inhabitants.



Figure 1.

Throughout photography (Fig.1) can be defined the complex reality which is given in the streets. It can be seen perfectly what happens, even create stories by ourselves. Thorough them, it can also be obtained a register of the afore-mentioned curious, unusual and exceptional situations which occur in the whole urban streets and, especially, in specific spaces that currently are not legislated and have been taken ownership of them according to the interests of the city.

2. Methodology

In Benidorm, the multicultural variety lives together in the same space. Because this, in order to understand this fact and the current Benidorm, it is very worthwhile to identify the evolution of its urban zones. To this effect, a study and research was conducted to know the growth and development over the year undergone by the city of Benidorm and the progress and increasing complexity of the relations between tourists and inhabitants in connection with the places and non-places of Benidorm. For that propose, by means of cartography can be determined the historic development of Benidorm. Lastly, the current Benidorm is criticized with the help of narrative and the historical description.

2.1. Characters

A natural and exceptional frame just as a human, dynamic and receptive population are the base elements that can explain the growing process of Benidorm.

Therefore, a factor to develop is the affluence of tourists (Fig. 2): half of foreign people and half of Spanish people. With this fact, it is really stated the type of people who use the public spaces, as well as the huge English collective that exists. Furthermore, the type of tourism, in which familiar tourism is predominant.



Figure 2.

2.2. Chrono cartography

In relation to the data previously mentioned, it has been created a psychogeography that is aimed to reflect the duality between a touristic city inhabited mostly by Spanish and the foreign who live because of tourism. All these aspects are connected to the Benidorm spaces. Both personalities have their peculiarities that, sometimes, can clash or being by mutual agreement. (Fig. 3)

The most controversial points of Benidorm are the society (foreign people vs. inhabitants) and the space (public space vs. private space). So as to understand the present, the accelerated growth, it was necessary to register what happened in the past.

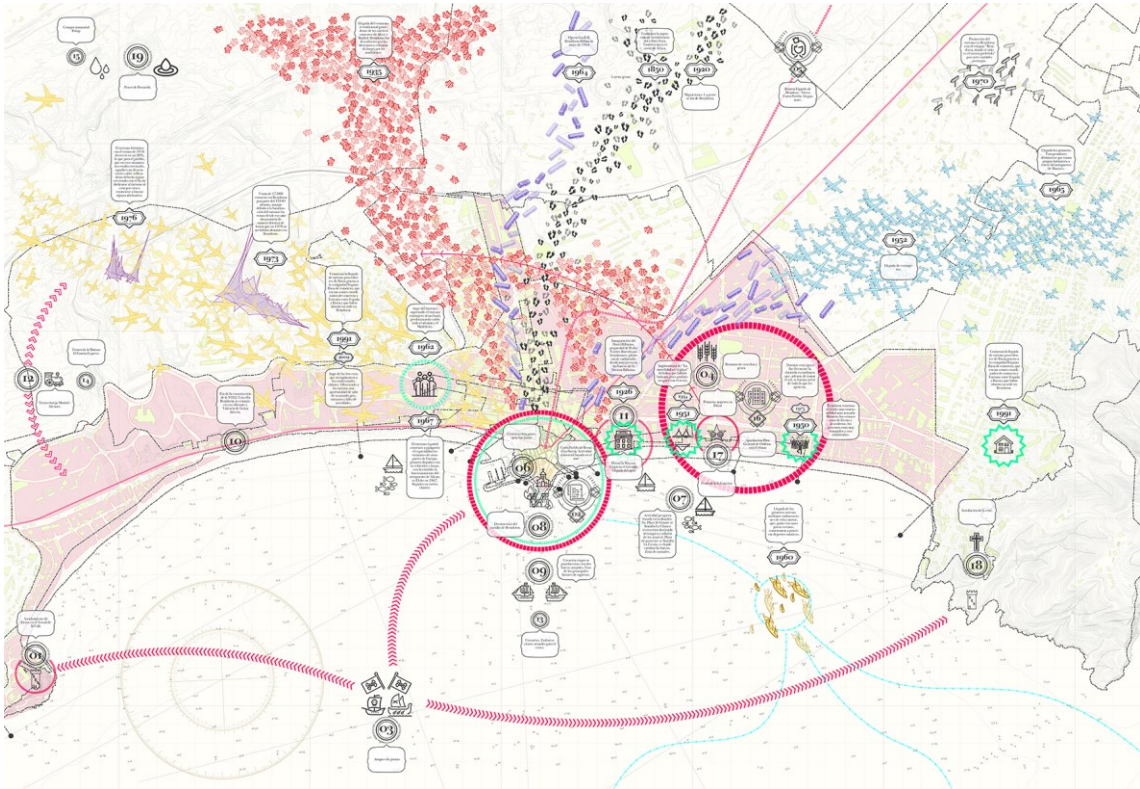


Figure 3.

2.3. Actors

To analyse the situation objectively, it has been taken into account in the opinion and the testimonials of 43 witnesses (Fig. 4). Moreover, others points of view have been considered, such as given by bibliographic references.

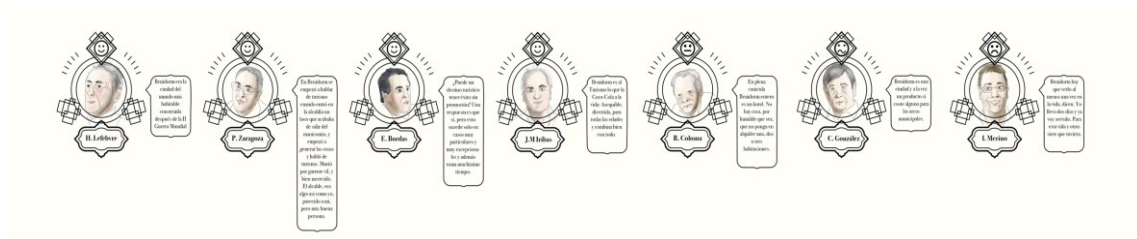


Figure 4.

2.4. Cartography of non-place

The non-place is a space where nothing concret is done, inhabited by anonymous beings. In Benidorm, non-places are found in the setbacks¹ (Fig. 5), which are spaces that, in the beginning, do not have a specific use, there was not anything. Nevertheless, inhabitants of the city, depending on the use asociated to the colindant comercial local (or the use that they prefer to assing to the balcony), have been evolutionating and becoming in places with the very essence. The anonimous people are still there, no one know each other, but all of them interact in ephemeral situations.

¹ A street, usually leaving more space on the pavement (walkside) and balconies



Figure 5.



Figure 6.

And even being places that look like having a defined use, they finished developing in other places.

Benidorm, actually, has been shown as an amusement park, where oneself is the protagonist of such attractions (Fig. 6). The touristic space has become in a scene, a new place where both visitors and citizenships can enjoy the reality (Fig. 7).

The non-places in Benidorm have evolved until being exclusive places of this city, which are reflected in the prototype, where it is fostering (exaggerate, show, reveal) the complexity of Benidorm (the reality that is behind) is searched and it is enhanced.

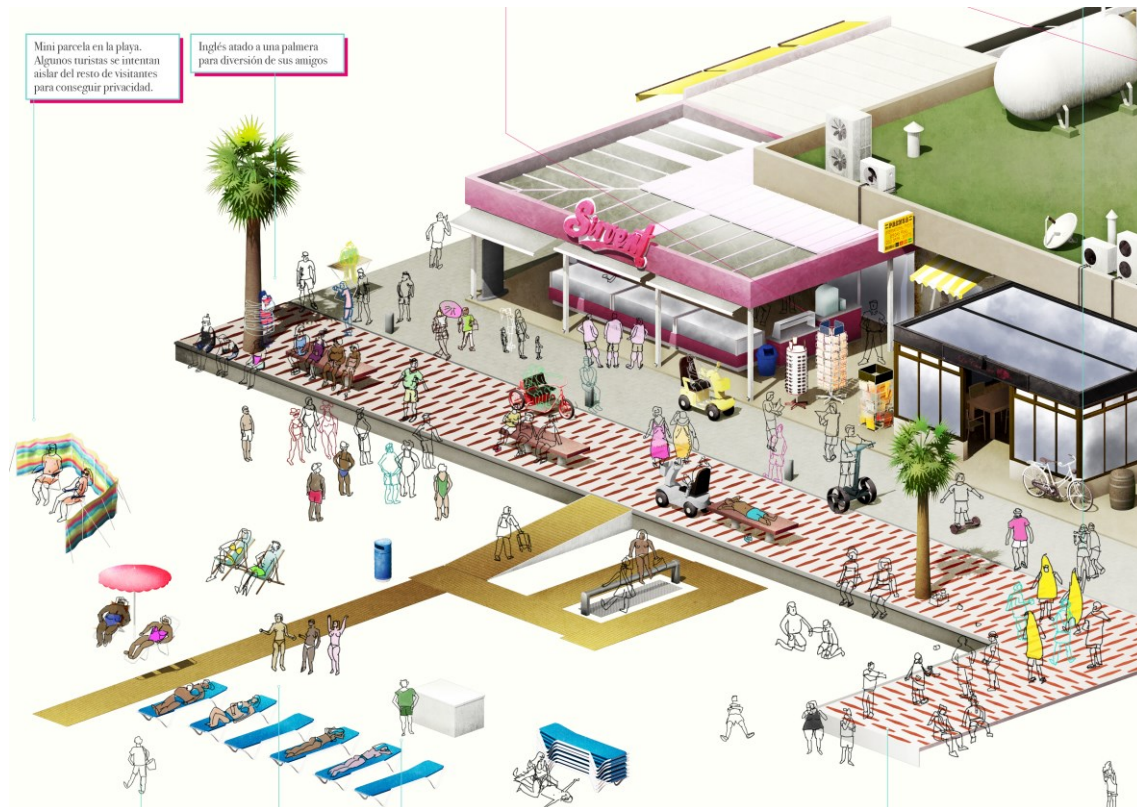


Figure 7.

3. Prototype

Finally, it was designed an experimental prototype (Fig. 8), which allows us to understand better the hidden reality, the complexity, the secrets of the success of the city.

In the prototype, the most apparent situations are praised in a new building, which collects all the unusual and unique uses that exist in the spaces in Benidorm (Fig. 9), and so on, is also understood as a claim to the tourist, as a sample that could arrive to some other places, as the branch of the almond do it by being a claim to a new public.

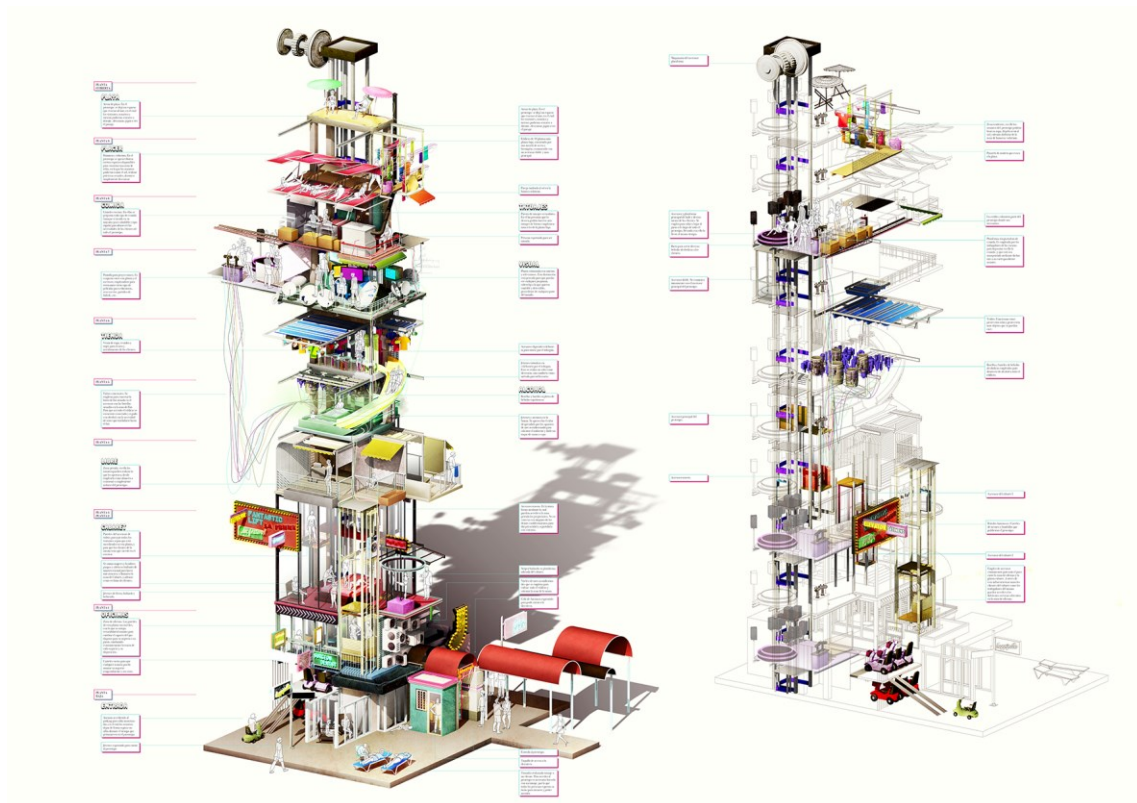


Figure 8.

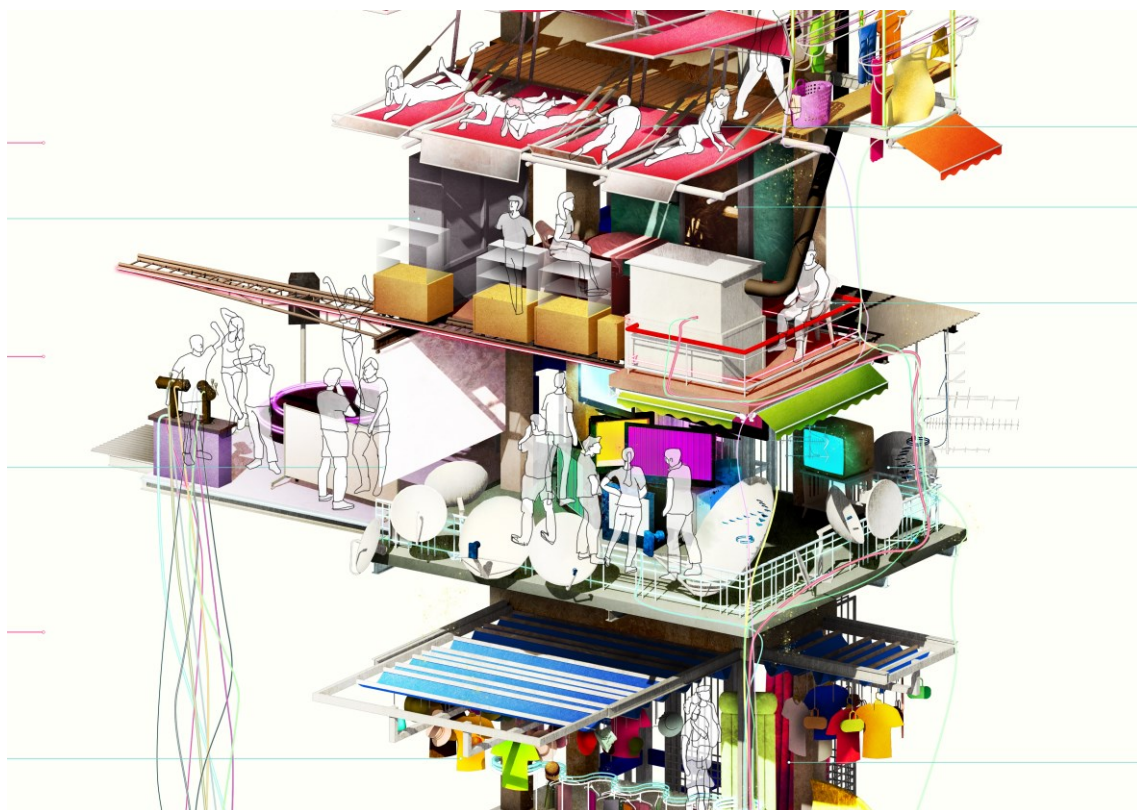


Figure 9.

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Biography

Jorge Flores Rodríguez. He was born on 9th July 1991. In 2017, he holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture at the University of Alicante, with an excellent mark. In 2014/2015, he was part of an Erasmus programme at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture of Paris-Belleville from September to July, where he graded a photography subject. After that, his point of view has changed about the people interactions and how photography could help to caught them. When he came back to Spain, he devoted oneself to investigate the spaces, non spaces of Benidorm and how people interacts with them, being it the object and purpose of his final degree project. He has collaborated with Estudio Agraph since 2016. His project Urban Experiences Laboratory is exhibited at the Spanish Pavilion Becoming of the Architecture Biennale of Venice 2018.